

A G E N D A



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council	Item ID	69043	Agenda Number	16.
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Meeting Date:	3/23/2017	Department:	Management Services
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Subject

Authorize negotiation and execution of a 24-month contract with VAN DAAL CONSULTING, to provide consulting services for the Austin Police Department in an amount not to exceed \$850,000.
Related to Item(s): 15, 17, 45

Amount and Source of Funding

Funding in the amount of \$142,500 is available in the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Operating Budget of the Austin Police Department. Funding for the remaining 18 months of the original contract period is contingent upon funding in future budgets. Funding in the amount of \$425,000 is available through an Interlocal Agreement with Travis County

Fiscal Note

A fiscal note is not required.

Purchasing Language:	
Prior Council Action:	
For More Information:	Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager, (512) 974-2222
Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:	
MBE / WBE:	
Related Items:	Interlocal Agreement with Travis County, Agenda Item # 69042 March 23, 2017.

Additional Backup Information

In May 2016, the Austin Police Department (APD) invited members from the Texas Forensic Science Commission (TFSC) and the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board (ACSLD/LAB) to conduct a site audit of the APD Forensic Services Division DNA Laboratory. Findings from that audit prompted APD to close the DNA laboratory.

The TFSC audit findings and the closure of the APD DNA lab had impacts for both the City, from an investigations perspective; and the County from the perspective of relying on potentially faulty DNA evidence to ensure that justice is properly served. Accordingly, representatives from the City, County, and legal defense organizations formed a working group to ensure these perspectives were addressed. A TFSC representative made herself available to consult with.

This contract will provide the City with a consultant to address the recommendations presented in TFSC's audit report. In addition, the consultant will identify the options and make recommendations on the optimal organizational

structure, staffing, training and leadership of a forensic DNA section of an accredited publicly funded crime laboratory for the Austin community. This plan will be based on best practices in crime laboratory organizations/agencies as well as applicable accreditation standards. A separate interlocal agreement with Travis County provides a structure for the City and County to share in the management and oversight of the consultant's work and cost of this contract. Should the City Council and the Travis County Commissioners Court approve the interlocal agreement, the County would pay for half of the cost for the consultant agreement.

Staff intends to negotiate a professional services agreement with Van Daal Consulting. Working with the Purchasing Office, a request for information (RFI) and follow-up set of questions were sent earlier this year to the interested consultants. To assist with the review of the consultants, the working group enlisted the help of Mr. Timothy Sliter, Ph.D. Dr. Sliter is Chief of the Physical Evidence Section at the Southwestern Institute of Forensic Sciences where he directs the DNA, Firearms, and Trace Evidence Units. Based on the RFI responses, the working group requested Van Daal Consulting provide a timeline and cost for this project.

Staff is conducting final discussions to settle on timeline and cost, which is expected to come in under \$850,000. A delay in approving or failure to approve this contract will result in the absence of scientific expertise to assist the City in addressing the TFSC's recommendations; delay expert advice in the legal materiality review of cases based on APD's DNA laboratory analysis impacted by TFSC's audit findings; and delay recommendations for the future provision of DNA analysis services in the best interests of the Austin community.